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## DOCUMENTS

### 1. *Santiago, and the Freeing of Spanish America, 1741.*

AFTER Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth had failed in their attack on Carthagena, they left that place, at the end of April and the beginning of May, 1741, and sailed to Jamaica. There on May 26 a council of war was held, consisting of Admiral Vernon and Sir Chaloner Ogle on the part of the naval forces and Generals Wentworth and Guise on the part of the army, together with the governor of the island, Edward Trelawny. The council, held at Santiago de la Vega (Spanish Town) is mentioned in Vernon's letter of May 30 to the Duke of Newcastle, printed in his *Original Papers relating to the Expedition to Carthagena*, London, 1744. (See pp. 126-128, 141.) But it is believed that the following minute of its determinations has never been printed. It is derived, by the courtesy of Dr. Herbert Friedenwald, Superintendent of the Manuscript Department in the Library of Congress, from the series of the "Vernon-Wager Navy Papers," in that library. This collection, bound in twelve large folio volumes, comprises many papers of great interest to students of colonial history.

It is perhaps unnecessary to recount the history of the expedition against Santiago de Cuba, resolved upon by this council of war. The military landed without opposition in the bay of Guantanamo, to which they gave the name of Cumberland, in honor of the royal duke. But on sending out parties to reconnoitre, Wentworth received such accounts of the difficulty of taking Santiago, that he judged it most prudent to withdraw. Vernon unwillingly acquiesced, and the expedition came to nothing.

The other paper is derived from the same source. It is believed that it has never been printed, and that it will be thought to be of present interest. The endorsement indicates it as not the work of Vernon, but of Stephen De Vere or Devereux. The two manuscripts are designated as Nos. 12 and 19, respectively, in Vol. VI. of the Vernon-Wager Papers.

#### I. COUNCIL OF WAR AT SANTIAGO DE LA VEGA, MAY 26, 1741.

At a General Council of War held at His Excellency Governour Trelawny's at S<sup>t</sup> Iago de la Vega, on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of May 1741.

M<sup>r</sup> Vernon having communicated to us, together with His Majesty's Instructions of the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1740, and the additional Instructions from my Lords Justices of the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1740, the Letters and Orders since receiv'd from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle of the 4<sup>th</sup> December, and the two of the 28<sup>th</sup> Febr'y last, and likewise, all the intercepted Letters (so providentially fallen into his hands, by Cap<sup>t</sup> Warren's destroying of Valladon the Privateer from S<sup>t</sup> Iago)<sup>1</sup> and the Intelligence sent him by Cap<sup>t</sup> Lee, and what was further observ'd of the motions of the Ships from Cadiz, by Captain Peyton of the Kennington, who was sent here by Cap<sup>t</sup> Lee, with these Advices of the nine Sail Men of War putting to Sea from Cadiz.

And Governour Trelawny having communicated to us, the favourable Disposition of the Gentlemen of this Island, to contributing to the Success of any Expedition that might be judg'd proper to be undertaken.

Your Council of War after maturely deliberating on the said Instructions, Orders, Letters, intercepted Intelligences, and Advices, and having regard to the great reduction of our Forces ;

It was the Opinion of the Council of War, that in regard to the Diminution of the Forces, the Security of this Island and our Trade, the Security of all Supplies coming to us, and preserving a Communication with this Island, for our Supplies ; the only Expedition that could be thought advisable to be undertaken, was against S<sup>t</sup> Iago de Cuba, a Port of great Importance to the Security of our Trade, and cutting off the baneful Correspondence between them and Hispaniola.

And tho in regard to the general Sickness, that had spread itself thro' Fleet and Army, we were not in very good condition for undertaking any new Expedition ; yet on the assurance given us by the Governour Trelawny, that we might rely on a Supply from the Island, of a thousand of the most serviceable of their Blacks, they could raise in the Island, to be all chosen Men, and to have proper Officers, and through a sincere Zeal for doing the utmost in our power, to answer the expectations of Our Royal Master, from the great Expence of this Expedition ;

It was the Resolution of Your Council of War, to undertake this Expedition against S<sup>t</sup> Iago, and to push it forward with all the dispatch, the Situation of our Affairs would admit of.

And M<sup>r</sup> Vernon having desir'd our Opinions, on that part of his Instructions of the 25<sup>th</sup> September, in regard to dispatching a proportionable number of his Ships home on those of the Enemies being return'd home, or destroyed, and represented to us the hazard, the unsheath'd eighty Gun Ships, and others of the most crazy of the Ships, would run, if they were not sent home to save a Summer's passage ; We concur'd with him in Opinion such ought to be dispatch'd home, so as a sufficient Force was reserv'd, in regard to the Spanish Squadron under Rodrigo de Torrez at the Havanna, and those mention'd to be under M. de Rochefeuil at Hispaniola.

<sup>1</sup> See Vernon's *Original Papers*, pp. 136, 137.

Given under our Hands at S<sup>t</sup> Iago de la Vega the 26<sup>th</sup> day of May 1741.

E: Vernon

Tho<sup>s</sup> Wentworth.

C: Ogle

J: Guise.

A Copy.

Since His Majesty's Forces have been so reduced by Sickness, I think the remaining number ought not to be hazarded, but on a Service that, if it succeed, may be of great Benefit and Importance to Great Britain.

I cannot think S<sup>t</sup> Iago de Cuba of Consequence, while we are masters at Sea, and I think, it should be an inviolable Maxim, to be Superiours, as we may be, at Sea in the West Indies, or else, Possessions in the West Indies, will be a Detriment, instead of a Benefit, to Great Britain ; and no Possessions but such as may be useful in Commerce, are for our Benefit.

Panama is of that nature, as it would command the Isthmus of Darien and therefore if there is Force enough, with the help of the Mosquito Indians, and Negroes under proper Officers from this Island, an Attempt upon that Place, would be in my Opinion most advisable.

Edw: Trelawny

A Copy.:

(Endorsed.)

General Council of War  
held at S<sup>t</sup> Iago de la Vega  
the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1741, with Gov<sup>r</sup>  
Trelawny's Reasons for  
dissenting from it

II. SOME THOUGHTS RELATING TO OUR CONQUESTS IN AMERICA,  
JUNE 6, 1741.

Our success at Carthagená, says many a hearty Briton, will, if the blow be properly follow'd, make us masters of all Spanish America. Conquest is allowed to be a good title. If we keep what we conquer we shall have the Trade of all the Spanish West Indies in our own hands.

I am far from envying my Country so much Glory and Riches ; but, I believe we shall have more of both if we limit our desires.

Admitting us in quiet possession of all Spanish America. To keep that possession we must do, as the Spaniards have done before us, we must have strong garisons and Colonies. This will estrange our hands and treasure, and we shall soon be in a worse condition than the Spaniards themselves.

Besides : Such a conquest, supposing us equal to the vast undertaking, will make us the Envy of our Neighbours. Attempting to engross trade is like aiming at universal monarchy ; it will raise such a Confederacy against us, as we cannot withstand : A wise man would never grasp at what he cannot hope to hold.

What shall we do then, you will say, now we are masters of the American Seas? shall we plunder and destroy their towns, and lay all waste before us? By no means. This will be carrying on the war in a piratical barbarous manner, without benefit to any but to the adventurers. But by so doing shall we not the sooner compel the King of Spain to allow us a free navigation in the American seas without Search? Such cruelty may have a different offset. But if it should bring the Spaniards to a Treaty, and if a peace were made in the most explicit terms, yet we can have no hopes of its lasting long, without our having some cautionary town in our hands; and our having such a place in our hands will draw upon us the Envy of others. But may we not keep a town or two, and thence carry on a Seperate trade with the natives? The Spaniard will never consent to this: and the retaining such places by force, while the King of Spain continues Lord of America, will be attended with the same inconveniences, in proportion, as aiming at an entire Conquest. But may we not compel the King of Spain to open his ports in America, and give a free trade to all nations? and will not this take off the Envy of others? I believe none will envy us such a Romantic Enterprise, in which we can expect no Success, and if we had the greatest, it would not answer the purpose.

I am far from thinking that opening a free trade for all nations to the Spanish dominions in America would be of any injury to us. For whoever considers the Situation, and native riches of Great Britain and Ireland, and of our Colonies in America, can never think that we shall be out traded to Spanish America by any nation whatsoever, if we can have but the common discernment, not to obstruct our own trade.

I shall not take any pains to prove the advantage of our Situation, as being well known. And I shall but just mention two articles of our native riches, I mean food and manufactures: if these two articles be duly encouraged we shall out trade all the world in Spanish America. Nor do I think it impracticable to open all the ports of Spanish America, if a proper method were followed.

Supposing now that we had reduced the King of Spain to submit to an open trade to all his ports in America, and that he is still to continue King of his American dominions: all, in my opinion, that can be stipulated in this case is, that, instead of carrying goods from all parts of Europe to old Spain (<sup>w<sup>ch</sup></sup> goods, as the trade now lies, are to be carried thence, in the King of Spain's Ships, to his plantations in America) all nations shall be at liberty to carry their goods directly to his ports in America: that such a duty shall be paid by the importer, as shall be regulated: that a cautionary town, with a proper territory, shall be left in the hands of his Britanic majesty, and successors in trust for the due performance of this treaty: that the garison shall be maintained by an impost on all Ships touching there: and that all the naval powers of Europe shall be guarantees of this treaty.

The King of Spain, by such a treaty, being admitted to be absolute Sovereign of his American dominions, he must be allowed to govern

those dominions in what manner he thinks fit, and, consequently, to keep up his viceroies, and all the rest of his officers, his garisons, and his fleets: and, in order to Support all this charge; the impost on goods imported directly into the ports of America must be very high, perhaps little inferior to the Indulto now laid on them in old Spain, and, if so the freetrader will receive but small benefit by this alteration in the channel of trade.

Our keeping a cautionary town will give great offence to the naval powers of Europe. I doubt whether our friends the Dutch will allow of it.

But the great difficulty will be in reducing the King of Spain to submit to such conditions. For, by this Scheme, Spanish America is still to continue under the tyranny of old Spain, a tyranny they have long groaned under, and which they are ready to shake off, whenever they shall have a proper opportunity. But if they find that all intended by us, is only to chastise the King of Spain, and to suffer him still to Lord it over them, they will not give us the least assistance, and without the assistance of the Natives we can never expect to lay open the ports of new Spain; but, with their help, we shall do it, in spite of all the powers of Europe. And if we enter into alliance with them, as with free people, we shall have a new, and just title to carry on the war in defense of our allies, and therefore we may hope it will be prosperous

It well becomes a free people to place others in the same condition with themselves. To deliver so many nations from Tyranny will be truer Glory than Alexander gained by all his Victories. Let me add to this, that we shall thereby greatly increase our own Riches, w<sup>ch</sup> is the end of all conquests: and we shall do it without raising the just envy of our neighbours, w<sup>ch</sup> is likely to make our happiness the more lasting. Because, Spanish America being free, their trade, like that of other free nations, will be equally free to all in Amity with them. Even old Spain itself will find the benefit of it, if their pride will permit them to turn merchants.

This will not be the first time that the Subjects of the King of Spain recovered their liberties, and with our help. Our glorious Queen Elizabeth was the great instrument, under god, of making the poor distressed States a free people. Their own industry made them rich, and they are still our good allies. Our posterity may expect to find their best allies in Spanish America.

By Spanish America I mean not only the original Americans, but also the new Americans, or descendants from the Spaniards. Let them all be free: and let them all settle their own respective governments in what manner they shall think fit. The more Government the better. The Romans made use of this very method in helping Greece, when oppressed by the King of Macedon, and with success.

To set Spanish America thus free must needs be a great undertaking, and a work of time: but this ought not to discourage us: for the war will maintain itself: I mean that our trade to the ports first opened will bring us in wealth enow to support the war.